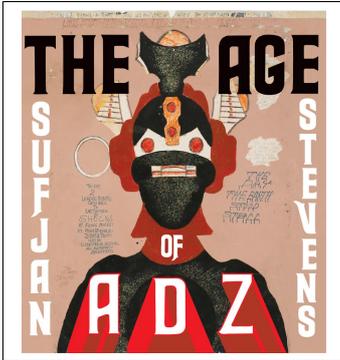


## ::: PROMORAMA ::: PRIORITÀ :::

**Etichetta** Asthmatic Kitty  
**Formato** Cd/Lp  
**Data di uscita** Ottobre 2010

**Artista** Sufjan Stevens  
**Titolo** The Age Of Adz  
**Distributore** Goodfellas



## SUFJAN STEVENS

### The Age Of Adz

The Age of Adz (pronounced odds) is Sufjan Stevens' first full-length collection of original songs since 2005's civic pop opus *Illinois*. This new album is probably his most unusual, first, for its lack of conceptual underpinnings, and second, for its preoccupation with Sufjan himself. The album relinquishes the songwriter's former story-telling techniques for more primal proclamations unhindered by concepts: there are few narrative conceits or character sketches; there are no historical panoramas, no civic gestures, no literary maneuvers, no expository illustrations drenched in cultural theory, no scene, setting, conflict, resolution, or denouement. Sufjan has stripped away the fabric of narrative artifice for a more primitive approach, emphasizing instinct over craft. The result is an album that is perhaps more vibrant, more primary, and more explicit than anything else he's done before. The themes developed here are neither historical nor polemical, but rather personal and primal (if even a little juvenile): love, sex, death, disease, illness, anxiety, and suicide make appearances in a tapestry of electronic pop songs that convey a sense of urgency, immediacy, and anxiety as never before seen in this songwriter.

Of course, the theme of unmitigated love (and affection) runs deepest, often with shameless candor. Whether singing about a sleepover, old age, illness, or the Apocalypse, Sufjan can't help but render everything through the lens of love and affection, the desire for contact, closeness, and connection. Perhaps this reveals what we've known all along in spite of the conceptual pageants and epic displays: that Sufjan is fundamentally a sensualist. And a morbid one, at that. Death looms large, either as an oracle at the apex of a volcano or as a shadowy omen in the window at night. What are we to make of these emotional and romantic climaxes back-dropped by fuming volcanoes, alien space craft, and demonic deities dressed like Boba Fett?

The cosmic themes are only more augmented by the obvious sonic shift on this album, which is deliberately electronic, synthesized (and occasionally danceable!). Acoustic guitars and banjos have been replaced here by drum machines and analog synthesizers. Loops, samples, and digital effects gurgle and hum underneath every verse, chorus, and bridge. For those familiar with Sufjan's earlier work (namely, the electronic album *Enjoy Your Rabbit*), this foray into the digital pop world shouldn't be so startling. The difference here is that the electronic sound collage is transposed on a collection of songs, while the sounds themselves are given equal footing to the voice, washed as it is in a pedal board of effects. The album is also heavily arranged with brass, strings, woodwinds, and a lush choir of backing voices. These "live" elements create vivacious juxtapositions against the montage of synthesized sounds, evoking their own kind of literal "sonic theory"— that is, the conflict and resolution between Real and Unreal, or Ordinary vs. Extraordinary.

### tracklisting

01. Futile Devices - 2:11
02. Too Much - 6:44
03. Age of Adz - 8:00
04. I Walked - 5:01
05. Now That I'm Older - 4:56
06. Get Real Get Right - 5:10
07. Bad Communication - 2:24
08. Vesuvius - 5:26
09. All for Myself - 2:55
10. I Want To Be Well - 6:27
11. Impossible Soul - 25:35

### info

per foto e copertina  
[www.promorama.it](http://www.promorama.it)

il sito del gruppo  
<http://www.myspace.com/sufjanstevens>

il sito dell'etichetta  
<http://asthmatickitty.com>

## **::: PROMORAMA ::: PRIORITÀ :::**

These themes are best illustrated in the album's namesake. The Age of Adz refers to the Apocalyptic art of Royal Robertson (1930 –1997), a black Louisiana-based sign-maker (and self-proclaimed prophet) who suffered from schizophrenia, and whose work depicts the artist's vivid dreams and visions of space aliens, futuristic automobiles, eccentric monsters, and signs of the Last Judgment, all cloaked in a confusing psychobabble of biblical prophecy, numerology, Nordic mythology and comic book jargon. Portions of the album use Robertson's work as a springboard into a cosmic consciousness in which basic instincts are transposed on a tableau of extraordinary scenes of divine wrath, environmental catastrophe, and personal loss. In Robertson's imagination, guns, lasers, gargoyles, and warring battleships upend the sins of mankind with the pageantry of a Hollywood B-movie. (A selection of Robertson's work adds extraordinary color to the album art as well).

But Robertson was also a man of mundane circumstances (his primary media were poster board, magic marker, and glitter). Living alone in a trailer in near poverty, even his most fantastical work contains heart-wrenching references to hunger, fatigue, anxiety, food stamps, loneliness and the desire for intimacy, scripted with unabashedly affectionate grievances. In the same way, Sufjan sets his imagination on the splendor of high places (divine revelation, oracles, love, the cosmos, the Apocalypse) rending his heart in the mire of loneliness, self-doubt, or panic, while his body urges for the ordinary touch of a lover, a brother, or a friend.